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Clarification with regard to the recent announcement made by the Franciscans in Brazil

This letter is to clarify the public announcement by the Franciscans in Brazil with regard to their petition to Bp. Rodrigo Da Silva for reception of Holy Orders.

1. While it is true that Bp. Pivarunas had stated there are differences of opinion amongst the traditional clergy, he has also stated on April 28, 2025 in the sermon at the priestly ordinations in Omaha that no one should elevate their opinions to a dogma and anathematize those who do not agree.

2. Now, it is no secret that there has been a controversy in Brazil in the interpretation of Canon 1094 and 1098 with regard to the canonical form for the marriage of Catholics. Most of the traditional bishops today hold that when Catholics attempt marriage before a civil judge or Protestant minister, that such marriages are invalid on account of lack of canonical form. (Canon 1094). The purpose of this invalidating law is to protect the Sacrament of Matrimony. Canon 1098 provides for an exception when it is morally impossible to approach or summon a competent minister.

3. There have been and are in the present a few traditional priests that hold that such marriages are valid. In the vacancy of the Apostolic See, there will be obviously differences of opinion and for that reason, I have tolerated the contrary opinion.

4. Unfortunately, the Franciscans have been intolerant of the opinion of the majority of the bishops in regard to their position on matrimony and it was for this reason that Bp. Pivarunas concluded his letter to the Franciscans; “As I mentioned to Fr. Francis Miller, OFM, during his visit, the Franciscans are free to approach another traditional Bishop for ordinations; I would not be offended nor opposed to such a decision.” In making that statement, Bp. Pivarunas intended to convey that if the Franciscans pursued another bishop for ordination, that that bishop would take upon himself the future responsibility of the Franciscans.

5. At the recent Fatima Conference in Spokane, Washington, Bp. Roy, Bp. Espina, Bp. Davila and Bp. Pivarunas had the opportunity to discuss this controversy. During this discussion, Bp. Roy made it known that the Franciscans had petitioned Bp. Rodrigo Da Silva for ordinations. As Bp. Pivarunas said previously, he is not opposed to them petitioning another bishop, however, for all practical purposes, Bp. Da Silva will assume the future responsibility for the Franciscans in Brazil.

6. In my recent communication with the bishops, I made it clear that a future meeting with the traditional bishops does not imply that we agree or condone the actions of our fellow bishops (for example, the imprudent ordinations of priests or consecrations of bishops) nor that we agree on each and every aspect of the situation in the Church today. (for example, submission to the liturgical changes decreed by Pope Pius XII in the 1950’s).

7. Lastly, it is Bishop Pivarunas’ hope that a future meeting of the bishops will at least achieve greater communication among the bishops in order to prevent problems in the future and to establish a basic cooperation amongst the bishops.

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